

**Testimony of Kelly Ray, patient at Connecticut Children's Medical Center,
to the Appropriations Committee
February 16, 2017**

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you all today on behalf of the hospital that saved my life. My name is Kelly Ray, I was born here in Connecticut, I am fourteen years old and a pediatric cancer survivor.

On August 27, 2012, my mom noticed a strange swelling on my left shin and took me in for an X Ray. That X-ray led to a slew of tests and finally, a biopsy of my shin bone to inspect a suspicious lump.

When I awoke from surgery at Connecticut Children's, I was diagnosed with bone cancer: Osteosarcoma, in my left tibia.

Dr. Michael Isakoff, (Also known as Dr. Mike) my oncologist at Connecticut Children's, explained that I would need almost a year of intensive chemotherapy, that I would lose my hair and that I'd have to spend over 120 nights in the hospital and have 5 surgeries throughout the course of treatment.

No one likes to be sick and no one ever wants to have to be in the hospital. But, there's a difference at Connecticut Children's. Connecticut Children's knows what kids need to get through the very long and difficult treatments that are required to save their lives.

As I underwent the often painful and exhausting treatment, they always tried to make me as comfortable and happy as possible. I spent most of my inpatient time at Connecticut Children's on the eighth floor. All of the rooms at Connecticut Children's are clean, bright, spacious, private, family friendly, and had an extra couch/bed or cot for a parent to stay overnight.

The amazing thing about Connecticut Children's is that even though they are so good at making kids feel comfortable, they are even better at healing them and making them **well**.

We are so blessed and fortunate to have this amazing hospital in our state. Other children come from all over the Northeast to get cancer care in Connecticut. Doctors bring their children to Connecticut Children's because the care is outstanding, and the services, technology and facilities are state-of-the-art.

In November of 2012, my left leg was amputated to ensure that all of my cancer was gone. This was a day that changed my life forever; however, not in the ways I had originally expected.

My team at CCMC helped me get back onto my feet quickly. Thanks to my fantastic doctors, physical therapists, and nurses at Connecticut Children's, I began to take my first steps in a new direction as soon as I could.

I finished Chemotherapy in May of 2013, and since then, with the help of CCMC, I have skied, surfed, biked, ran, swam, sailed, and done things I didn't even know were possible.

Thanks to the fantastic care I received at Connecticut Children's, I am able to live a life filled with amazing experiences. Dr. Mike and the rest of the team at Connecticut Children's not only saved my life, but when they gave it back to me, I discovered that it had been enriched and that I could live without limits.

Once again, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you about my experience at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. By making children well in our state, Connecticut Children's continues to provide the world-class care that is critical to Connecticut's future.

As you consider your priorities in planning your budget for the coming year, please remember the financial needs and good works of the incredible hospital that saved my life and the lives of so many other children in our state and the Northeast.

Thank you.